



Home & Garden

Nurseries, florists bloom in pandemic

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Grant County nurseries and florists didn't slow down much during the pandemic — in fact, business picked up.

Customers spending more time at home resulted in many looking to local flower shops to spruce up the space where they spent the majority of their time while waiting for COVID-19 case counts to drop.

Julia Justice of Better Blooms and Gardens has been in business for over 20 years and says houseplants and succulents have been a hot item during the pandemic.

"Those were things (customers) were looking for because they were stuck in their homes," she said. "There is still interest in that."

Justice said she saw an uptick in people who had never had the time to garden before coming into her shop to make purchases. "When people were buying plants, they were realizing they'd never had time to work in their back yards before. Whether they were planting ornamental grass or blueberries, it didn't matter."

Justice says she doesn't think the pandemic led to a better appreciation for gardening so much as



A hanging flower pot at Better Blooms and Gardens on Friday, May 20, 2022.

Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

there wasn't anything else to do. "If you had to be home, you could sit on a couch and watch TV or you could actually get some house projects done," she said. "I think for most of us it was a catch-up time."

Terry Bowden of A Flower Shop N More said her business has seen

a tremendous boost during the pandemic. Bowden said the shop didn't see too many changes in trends other than the size of flower arrangements.

"It was trending on the incredible side," Bowden said. "We'd have people ask us what our normal bouquet is and we'd tell them \$45 or \$50, and they'd say they wanted to spend \$250 or \$400. I was in shock. It wasn't just one person, it just kept coming and coming."

Bowden says the shop is back to "normal" now, but even that baseline isn't the same as it was pre-pandemic.

"Our higher end and really high end would be \$75-\$100," she said. "Now when people say they'd like a small bouquet, I've noticed that it's going to be \$75 and up for a small bouquet. I don't understand where that is coming from, especially in our little community, because that definitely is not the norm."

People are buying the same types of flora, they're just buying more of it, according to Bowden.

"I think that people are at home more even now and are just spending more of their quality time at home," she said.

The uptick in volume is something that Bowden isn't sure will change anytime soon. "We're probably ordering three or four times the amount of flowers. When you put it in that kind of perspective, it's kind of huge."

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Curb your home's carbon footprint

Family Features Editorial
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MISSION, Kansas — In every room of your home, you'll likely find numerous devices, appliances and fixtures that rely on the electric grid for power. Collectively, they affect your carbon footprint more than you may realize. Converting to lower carbon alternatives can help you be a better steward for the environment while reducing your reliance on electricity.

'As a father, husband, home

builder and real estate agent, I think it's important to make smart choices for a cleaner today and greener tomorrow," said Matt Blashaw, residential contractor, licensed real estate agent and host of HGTV's "Build it Forward." "We all want to be good stewards of the Earth. I want people to think beyond planting a tree or recycling. The time is right now to choose a diverse, low-carbon energy mix to power our homes and businesses."

Consider these environmentally friendly upgrades from Blashaw and the experts at the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) to help decarbonize Earth:

Smart thermostats

Programmable thermostats and smart plugs don't conserve electricity on their own, but they help you become more aware of your energy consumption and adapt your usage to avoid waste. The introduction of programmable thermostats made it possible to adjust the temperature in your home when you're not there or when you are sleeping.

Some smart thermostats take those adjustments even further by learning your household habits and adjusting the temperature to accommodate your usage patterns. You can also make adjustments remotely,

and some models allow you to control specific zones or rooms independently so you're only using the energy you really need. When combined with low-carbon, efficient HVAC units, smart thermostats can help lessen the impact on the planet.

Motion sensors

Like programmable thermostats and smart plugs, motion sensors help manage your energy usage. Motion sensors ensure you're only drawing electricity to illuminate a space when it's in use or when the light quality falls below a certain threshold. You may be in the habit of turning on a switch when you enter a room whether you need the extra light or not. Relying on a sensor reduces the waste associated with that routine and helps ensure lights are turned off when they may otherwise be forgotten in an empty room.

Appliances

You may be surprised to learn the difference it can make to swap appliances for a different energy source. According to PERC, propane appliances are more efficient and produce fewer greenhouse gases than electric appliances. For example, propane-powered clothes dryers generate up to 42%

fewer greenhouse gas emissions compared to electric dryers. They also dry clothes faster than electric dryers, and the moist heat is gentler on fabrics and can even help relax wrinkles and static cling.

Similarly, propane-powered cooking ranges generate up to 15% fewer greenhouse gas emissions compared to electric ranges while also allowing for greater control of heat levels. In addition, their instant flame turn-off capabilities help them cool faster than electric stoves, which can remain dangerously hot after they have been turned off.

Energy-efficient windows

Nearly one-third of energy loss in your home can be attributed to windows, especially if they're older or in poor condition. Even windows in good condition can be a source of energy loss if there's only one pane of glass or you have air leaks around the frame. Upgrading to double- or triple-pane windows can be costly but making more cost-efficient improvements like caulking and weatherstripping can reduce window-related energy loss. You can also rely on window treatments such as drapes or blinds, awnings or plant vegetation that provide shade to help manage how your windows contribute to your energy needs.

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS WEED?

Perennial Pepperweed is a perennial weed that grows from 1 to 6 feet tall. This weed establishes and colonizes very rapidly. Perennial Pepperweed often grows in hay meadows, and disturbed areas. This noxious weed is beginning to show up in various areas throughout Grant County. It's believed that Perennial Pepperweed is entering the county in hay. If you find or think you have found this weed please contact Grant SWCD Weed Control at 541-575-1554.

Perennial Pepperweed

(Lepidium latifolium)



For more information call
Grant SWCD Weed Control
541-575-1554



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